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suckling, will understand the naturalness of the proverb. The spirit of the precept is therefore that of the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and with this naturally fall in the passages which we find in Ex. xxii., 29; Lev. xxii., 27, 28, and Deut. xxii., 6, 7.

G. LANSING.

The Study of Palestinian Life.—Well has it been said, “Immutability is the most striking law of Eastern life.” This unchangeableness gives immense weight to all researches into the present condition of Palestine. We have had of late much very important work done by the Palestine Exploration Fund. The *land* has been surveyed throughout by able men with most valuable and interesting results. But far more valuable and interesting discoveries are to be made in an exploration of its *life*. Not only are many questions of topography of comparatively minor value to the Biblical student, even when perfectly clear, but such is the state of emptiness, ignorance, wasting and general decay into which the country has fallen for upwards of a thousand years that a perfect identification of most Scriptural sites is scarcely possible. But in the case of the manners, customs, productions, great natural features, and a large part of the language of the people, these through ages of convulsion have survived unaltered, and may be seen and heard to-day in Emmanuel’s Land the same in all essentials as they were seen and heard by David three thousand years ago. Ruin has been able to make but little havoc in these living, divinely-preserved commentaries on the Written Word. And more than this, the simple, everyday features of Palestine life, when once recognised, throw, in very many instances, a broad flood of light across the pages of the Bible. The identification of the site of a city may serve to explain one or two important narratives, but the discovery of an ancient custom, a regular atmospherical phenomenon, or a technical expression still on the lips of the people, may give a new force—ay, perhaps a new meaning—to a hundred passages.—*Jas. Neil, in Palestine Explored.*

Camp-fires in the Holy Land.—The lighting of camp-fires is a constant and very noticeable feature of journeys in the Holy Land. Fuel for this purpose is afforded by the low, woody, herbaceous growth, partaking largely of a thorny nature, which abounds in the deserts, and is to be met with by the wayside in most parts of the country. The “fire of thorns” is often alluded to in the Old Testament, and every resident in Palestine has reason to know what a familiar sight it is.¹ Easterns, who have a great dread of darkness and a passionate fondness for light, seem to rejoice to seize every opportunity of making these bonfires, and continuing them far into the night. They particularly delight in the crackling and the bright flames which thorn bushes specially throw out. They kindle these fires, however, as much for protection as for pleasure. The lurid light thus given serves to scare away the wild beasts which come out at night in many lonely places, and also to show to those on the watch the approach of thieves and robbers. When traveling under the escort of *Bedaween* Arabs in certain dangerous parts of the desert, travelers have observed that their wild escort keep up watch-

¹ Psalm cxviii., 12; Isaiah xxxiii., 12. Sometimes the mention of fire in connection with thorns refers to large conflagrations kindled in autumn. These extensive fires are lighted to clear the stubble lands of their wild growth, amongst which thorny plants of many kinds are very numerous (Exodus xxii., 6; 2 Samuel xxiii., 6, 7; Nahum i., 10). The context generally shows which kind of fire is meant.

fires round the camp all night, while the "keepers," or guards, shout out at intervals to render the protection more complete. On one occasion, while traveling through the waterless desert leading to Palmyra, when within a short distance of its ruins, I had to pass a large camp of the 'Anazeh tribe of *Bedaween*. I was traveling all night, accompanied by a friend and a government escort of soldiers. For an hour before we drew near to them, we saw large bright fires encircling the encampment, and we had to ride far out of our way in order to avoid them. The flames of these fires were kept up till daybreak.

There would seem to be a plain allusion to this practice in the promise of Jehovah's safeguard over Jerusalem in millennial times. "Jerusalem shall abide as the country parts, for the multitude of men and cattle therein. And I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about."¹ All Eastern cities to this day are surrounded with high massive walls and stout iron-plated and iron-barred gates. The security, wealth, and safety of Israel during the fulness of Messiah's kingdom is shown in this representation by its walls being thrown down, its boundaries immensely enlarged, and its being inhabited like a vast camp over which the Lord Himself continually watches.

Still clearer is the reference to these camp-fires kindled for protection, in a passage in Isaiah. The prophet, after administering comfort to the faithful in Israel, proceeds to warn the faithless and self-righteous of the utter futility of their carnal efforts to seek salvation. To all who fear Jehovah he says—

"Let him that walketh in darkness,
and hath no light,
Trust in the name of Jehovah,
And stay himself upon his God."²

But to the unbelievers he cries, in the next verse,

"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire,
That gird you about with flames!
Walk in the light of your fire,
And in the flames ye have lighted:
This shall ye have from my hand;
Ye shall lie down in sorrow."

Here the girding about with flames, evidently as a means of protection in the darkness, is connected with lying down to sleep. Yet their rest shall be broken by trouble and sorrow, notwithstanding all the flames of the watch-fires with which they are surrounded.—*Jas. Neil, in Palestine Explored.*

Influence of the Jews in the History of Mankind.—Never at any time, except it be quite lately, have the Jews numbered more than six or seven millions; throughout their whole history, they have been a people despised and hated of all nations, and yet there is no doubt that, notwithstanding all this, they have exerted, and in one way and another, are still exerting, a transforming and determining influence upon human life, beyond that of any nation that has ever lived upon the earth. This is the more remarkable that whereas, in the case of other nations, as, for example, Greece and Rome, their day of greatest influence was the day of their greatest national prosperity, and that influence waned with their declining fortune, with Israel, the reverse has been the case. With the accession of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the Jewish state began a course of steady decay, but throughout this period, from soon after its beginning for several hundred years, were pro-

¹ Zechariah ii., 4, 5. ² Isaiah l., 10.